



Resource Family Connection

News, Events, and Information Benefiting the Children of Waukesha County September and October, 2021



7 Tips for Getting to Know a Teen You Are Fostering or Adopting

By: Alternative Family Services

You've heard that the need for families for teens in foster care is great, and you want to do something to help. But you've spent time with teens, and in fact, you were a teenager yourself once! So you know that talking with kids at this age can be tough.

We wrote these seven tips based on our work with children in foster care, but the majority of this advice applies to communicating with any young person.

1. Channel your inner plant. Using the "potted plant" style of communication with adolescents advocated by psychologist Lisa Damour means being steady, always having a consistent presence, and being there when you need to, but not in their face all the time. While this is prudent advice for any teen, it's especially ideal for youth that may have lacked consistent supports in their past.

In this *New York Times* article, the psychologist writes: *By their nature, adolescents aren't always on board with our plans for making the most of family time and they aren't always in the mood to chat. Happily, the quality parenting of a teenager may sometimes take the form of blending into the background like a potted plant.*

Damour goes on to explain that research on parent-child attachment has demonstrated that children find the presence of an adult reassuring. She suggests that teens, like toddlers, may feel most at ease when parents "balance active engagement with detached availability."

2. Ask open-ended questions. This way teens can't rely on simple, one-word answers. The format of the question itself gives them the space they may need to fully articulate themselves. Be interested and curious, but be careful to not pry or they may clam up. Consider framing questions with "I wonder..." to show curiosity. After all, the last thing any teen wants is an adult asking them too many questions about their personal lives.



How to Handle a Tough First Day of School

By: Deborah Farmer Kris

On her first day of preschool, my daughter woke up ready to go! She was joining the Owl class, and so she put on an owl shirt, helped me pack her lunch, and grabbed her blankie for nap time.

The day didn't go as planned.

About 30 minutes after drop-off, I got a call saying she had been accidentally placed in the wrong class, so they were taking her over to the Bear class instead.

Two hours after that, I got a call asking if she had a lunch. Apparently, it got lost in the shuffle of moving rooms. And when I picked her up, she wordlessly handed me her wet blanket. She had spilled her water on it just before nap time.

In these moments, I try to take a deep breath and check my emotions first. If she had watched me, say, yell at the principal for the placement error or rush in to meet her with a panicked look on my face, it would have escalated an already tough day. What she needed was my reassuring calm that she was okay and that tomorrow would be a little easier.

3. Talk while engaged in an activity. It could be driving in the car, eating a meal, playing a game, or other favorite activity. This way, the conversation can flow more organically and won't feel like an interrogation. The activity can also help everyone feel more relaxed, which will help the conversations move along.

4. Be real! Speak *with* them and not *at* them. Be authentic as possible. Teens know when you're being fake. Talk to them like you would anyone else.

5. Let them be the expert. Ask their advice about something. Teens are far more likely to open up and talk with you about topics they care a lot about - like technology, music, and sports. Letting them direct the dialog by sharing their knowledge and experience can give them a way to open up.

6. Briefly share something about yourself. Conversations are usually two sided. No teen wants to be interrogated or lectured. Provide an opportunity to let them get to know you better. But, don't just drone on and on. If you start to feel like economics teacher Ben Stein in *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, then you're doing it wrong.

Sharing feelings - even negative feelings - is fine! For example, you might talk about what you struggled with as a teenager or a challenge you overcame at their age. Or you might reflect on what you really felt during a shared experience, like anger at someone who cut you both off in a line or gild about dropping an item at the grocery store.

7. If they don't want to talk, don't make them. If you're not getting a response, just say "I'll check back in later" - and then actually check back. This shows that you're really listening and that you'll be consistent and available for them, which is exactly what many kids in foster care really need from you.

Getting to know a teenager is a journey. Being thoughtful and considerate of their life experiences and needs when communicating with them is a great first step.

Kids bring so many emotions to the first week of school: excitement and fear, wonder and worry. So when something goes wrong - from someone mispronouncing their name to not understanding the directions, from missing home to dropping their lunch on the floor - it can feel overwhelming.

Here are four ways you can help kids navigate heading back to school.

1. Talk about what to expect in advance. Fred Rogers once said, "When children know ahead of time what's going to happen - and not happen - they can prepare themselves for what's coming. They can think about it and get used to their feelings about it."

Talk to your child about what school will look like in simple, practical terms. What are the names of their teachers? What will the morning routine at home look like? What will they need to put in their backpack each day? How will they get to school? What will they eat for lunch? How will they get home?

How to Handle a Tough First Day of School

(Continued from page 1)

Watch the Daniel Tiger back-to-school episode where his mom sings, "When we do something new, let's talk about what we'll do." Or read back-to-school books together such as:

- ◉ Daniel Goes to School (A Daniel Tiger book), by Becky Friedman
- ◉ The Kissing Hand, by Audrey Penn
- ◉ Wemberly Worried, by Kevin Henkes
- ◉ The Kind of Kindergarten, by Derrick Barnes

When you talk about what to expect, you can answer many of their unspoken questions - and better help your child navigate those unexpected moments that arise.

2. Prepare for big emotions. It takes a lot of energy to adjust to a new routine and get to know new teachers and classmates. As one of my favorite kindergarten teachers reminds families, it takes most children six weeks to adjust to a new school year. Those after school tantrums are normal and don't mean they are having a terrible time at school!

Kids often hold in their emotions during the day. After all, you've spent years helping them develop strategies to manage their behavior and work well in groups. But undoubtedly at least one thing happens every day that makes them feel worried, sad, or confused. Those feelings often come spilling out in the safety of home. Create a predictable after school routine, including a snack and some downtime. And when your child does have a meltdown, stay close and stay calm. The storm will pass, and then we can help them work through the emotions behind it.

3. Express your confidence in them. Children read our emotions for cues about how they should react. If we express our confidence in them, they will pick up on this.

Last year, like just every other parent in America, I was really nervous about what the school year would bring! But the night before the first day, I told my rising first-grader: "I am so excited for all the books you are going to read, all the words you are going to write, all the pictures you are going to draw, all the structures you are going to build, all the math you are going to learn, and all the ways you will become stronger and kinder and more responsible. I love watching you grow!"

When something goes wrong, you can also use it as an opportunity to express your confidence in them:

- ◉ Thanks for telling me what happened. We will figure this out together.
- ◉ Wow, that sounds like a tough situation at recess. You did the right thing to tell your teacher.
- ◉ I know you were really nervous about ____, but you did it. You are so brave.
- ◉ Learning something new can be so frustrating. But you keep working at it. That's perseverance.

4. Reach out to the teacher. The parent-teacher relationship is so key to helping kids thrive. If you notice your child struggling academically, socially, or emotionally, reach out to your child's teacher. If you have questions about the classroom or your child's progress, reach out! You do not need to wait for the first parent-teacher conference to make contact.

When I taught elementary school, I would send home a letter in August asking, "What do you want me to know about your child? What are some of their strengths and interests? Do they have any hopes or worries about school?" Now that I'm a parent, I send my own email each year, sharing a few details about my kids that I think will be helpful for the teacher.

Finally, it's totally normal if you as the parent are having anxiety about the start of a new year. We are all working so hard to take care of our kids that we sometimes need a reminder to take care of our own needs, too. As Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California's Surgeon General and a pediatrician, told me, "Our emotional wellbeing is the most important ingredient for our children's emotional wellbeing. Self-care is not selfish."

COVID-19 Relief Funds for Older Foster Youth

The COVID-19 public health emergency has put children, youth, and families at risk. To support older foster youth who have aged out of care (a group home, residential care center, treatment foster home, or court-ordered kinship care), the federal government has passed the Supporting Foster Youth and Families Through the Pandemic Act. Under this act, foster youth who live in Wisconsin and who have aged out of care between **January 27, 2020 and September 30, 2021**, can access pandemic relief funds to get financial support with rent or mortgage payments, utility bills, car loans, groceries, and other basic needs. For additional information, visit: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/foster-relief>.

Guidance for COVID-19 Prevention in K-12 Schools (Updated August 5, 2021)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>

Key Takeaways

- ◉ Students benefit from in-person learning, and safely returning to in-person instruction in the fall 2021 is a priority.
- ◉ Vaccination is the leading public health prevention strategy to end the COVID-19 pandemic. Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as extracurricular activities and sports.
- ◉ Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, CDC recommends universal indoor masking by all students (age 2 and older), staff, teachers, and visitors to K-12 schools, regardless of vaccination status.
- ◉ In addition to universal indoor masking, CDC recommends schools maintain at least 3 feet of physical distance between students within classrooms to reduce transmission risk. When it is not possible to maintain a physical distance of at least 3 feet, such as when schools cannot fully re-open while maintaining these distances, it is especially important to layer multiple other prevention strategies, such as screening testing.
- ◉ Screening testing, ventilation, handwashing, and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick and getting tested, contact tracing in combination with quarantine and isolation, and cleaning and disinfection are also important layers of prevention to keep schools safe.
- ◉ Students, teachers, and staff should stay home when they have signs of any infectious illness and be referred to their healthcare provider for testing and care.
- ◉ Many schools serve children under the age of 12 who are not eligible for vaccination at this time. Therefore, this guidance emphasizes implementing layered prevention strategies (e.g., using multiple prevention strategies together consistently) to protect students, teachers, staff, visitors, and other members of their households and support in-person learning.
- ◉ Localities should monitor community transmission, vaccination coverage, screening testing, and occurrence of outbreaks to guide decisions on the level of layered prevention strategies (e.g. physical distancing, screening testing).

Residential In-Person Trick or Treat

For an updated list: <https://www.hauntedwisconsin.com/things-to-do/kids-family/trick-or-treat/>

Brookfield, City

Date/Time: Sunday, October 31; 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Brookfield, Town

Date/Time: Sunday, October 31; 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Elm Grove

Date/Time: Saturday, October 30; 5:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Hartland, Village

Date/Time: Sunday, October 31; 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Menomonee Falls

Date/Time: Sunday, October 31; 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Oconomowoc

Date/Time: Saturday, October 30; 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Fall Festivals

Elegant Farmer Autumn Harvest Festival

Enjoy beautiful fall colors aboard a tractor-pulled hayride, pony ride, or train ride. Come try our 5-acres, family-friendly farm scene corn maze. While visiting, indulge with our delicious specialty foods including cider, make-your-own caramel apple, cider donuts, pulled pork, chili, and more!
When: September 11 - October 24, 2021; Saturdays/Sundays Only
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Fee: There is a fee for the activities

For additional information: <https://www.elegantfarmer.com/event-calendar/>

Apple Harvest Festival

Arts and crafts, sweet treats, scarecrow land, children's activities, music, and more!

When: Saturday, September 18, 2021

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Fee: \$10 per carload

For additional information: <https://www.waukeshacounty.gov/appleharvestfestival>

Delavan Scarecrow Fest

Free pumpkins, DIY Scarecrow building workshop, children's activities, food trucks, and more!

When: Saturday, September 18, 2021

Time: 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Fee: Free admission and parking

For additional information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/4971634316186579>

Zachariah Acres Fall Festival

Exclusively for children and young adults with special needs, and their families. Let's celebrate Fall together with Pumpkin Olympics, hay wagon rides, fishing, s'mores, and more!

When: Saturday, September 25, 2021

Time: 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Fee: Unknown

For additional information: <https://m.facebook.com/events/2954640834808061>

DaySpring Fall Harvest Fest

DaySpring's Annual Harvest Fest is a highlight of the community each year! Free food, bounce houses, treasure trail, and a free pumpkin patch!

When: Sunday, September 26, 2021

Time: 3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Fee: Free, but ticket reservation required

For additional information: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/event/day-spring-fall-celebration/2021-09-26/>

Fun Activities

Family Outdoor Movie Night

Date/Movie:

Friday, September 10, 2021: Field of Dreams

Friday, September 24, 2021: League of Their Own

Friday, October 1, 2021: Playing with Fire

Saturday, October 16, 2021: Goosebumps

Time: Movie starts at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Nixon Park, 175 E. Park Ave., Hartland

Fee: Free

For additional information: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/event/family-movie-night/2021-09-10/>

Wagfest

The day-long festival includes food, music, shopping, several different raffles, and of course - activities for dogs! *Waukesha County Foster Care will have a vendor booth at Wagfest this year!*

When: Saturday, September 11, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Where: Mitchell Park, 3140 Mitchell Park Dr, Brookfield

For additional information: <https://ebhs.org/event/wagfest/>

Milwaukee County Zoo Free Day

When: Saturday, October 2, 2021

Time: 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. (Entrance gates close at 3:15 p.m.)

Where: Milwaukee County Zoo, 10001 W. Bluemound Rd, Milwaukee

Fee: Free admission, parking fee remains in effect

For additional information: <https://lakecountryfamilyfun.com/event/free-zoo-day-milwaukee-county-zoo/2021-10-02/>

Business Trick or Treat

Delafield

Business trick or treating starts at 5:00 p.m., followed by the Grand Pumpkin Illumination at dusk.

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2021

Times: 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

For additional information: <https://delafieldchamber.com/halloween-in-delafield>

Pewaukee

Enjoy trick or treating with merchants and vendors while strolling up and down the sidewalks of downtown Pewaukee!

Date: Saturday, October 23, 2021

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

For additional information: <https://radiomilwaukee.org/event/arts-halloween-fun-fest/>

Menomonee Falls

Participating Menomonee Falls Downtown businesses will host Trick or Treat for the kids... it will be a spooky good time!

Date: Thursday, October 28, 2021

Time: 4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

For additional information: <https://www.facebook.com/events/menomonee-falls-downtown/trick-or-treat-at-downtown-businesses/343221230413405/>

Library Information

Research Database

Find what you need with free, online research resources offered by your library and the Bridges Library System. With accurate information and accessible 24/7 from the library or from your home, you only need your library card to get started.

For additional information: <https://bridgeslibrarysystem.org/databases>

Virtual Reading Programs

Register yourself or your family, and then pick a reading challenge!

For additional information: https://waukeshapubliclibrary.org/virtual-reading-programs/?doing_wp_cron=1628627096.7256050109863281250000d

Craft Time!

Melted Crayon Leaf Suncatchers

By: firefliesandmudpies.com

What You'll Need:

- ✧ Mini Grater
- ✧ Crayons
- ✧ Wax Paper
- ✧ Old Towel or Dishcloth (2)
- ✧ Iron
- ✧ Double-sided Tape
- ✧ Sharpie Marker
- ✧ Scissors



What You'll Do:

1. Carefully grate crayons over pieces of wax paper with the mini grater. Be sure to use multiple colors, as it realistically resembles the way leaves change color.
2. Place a second sheet of wax paper over the crayon shavings.
3. Center old dishcloths/towels under (to protect your ironing board cover) and on top (to protect your iron) of both pieces of wax paper.
4. Gently iron over the wax paper. The wax paper and crayon shavings melt together.
5. Trace leaf shapes onto the wax paper.
6. Cut out the shapes.
7. Place the cut out leaves on the window with double-sided tape.
8. Sit back and admire the beautiful fall colors you just created!



Additional Training and Events



Due to COVID-19 and social distancing, we currently are not having any in-person trainings or informational sessions. A survey will be distributed at a later time regarding in-person trainings.

Kinnect Virtual Support Group

Join us for this opportunity to connect with other caregivers and grandparents as a way to share the joys and challenges of being a relative caregiver.

Morning Group

4th Thursday of each month

Date: September 30 (5th Thursday), October 28, 2021

Time: 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-group-kinnect-relative-caregivers-of-children-morning-tickets-114153498186>

Evening Group:

3rd Wednesday of each month

Date: September 15, 2021 (This appears to be the last offering of this group at this time)

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-group-kinnect-relative-caregivers-of-children-evening-tickets-132317728889>

Waukesha County Foster Parent Information Sessions

Open to Waukesha County residents interested in learning more about foster care in our community. Also required for any new foster parents. The information sessions will be held virtually using Microsoft Teams.

2nd Wednesday of each month

Date: September 8, October 13, November 10, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

4th Thursday of each month

Date: September 23, October 28, 2021

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

To Register: Email Rhonda Klinger (rklinger@waukeshacounty.gov). Please include your full name, email, and the information session that you plan to attend.



Trauma-Informed Parenting Support

Adoptive, Kinship, and Guardianship parents and caregivers: Please join us for a trauma-informed virtual support group just for you! This group is especially for caregivers who are:

- ⊗ Parenting youth with trauma histories
- ⊗ Parenting youth with emotional or behavioral challenges and/or diagnoses such as RAD, DMDD, and ODD.

When: 3rd Monday of each month

Date: September 20, October 18, 2021

Time: 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

To Register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-group-trauma-informed-parenting-tickets-144093743265?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Virtual Sibling Support Group

This support group is for any sibling, age 12-16, who is part of an adoptive, guardianship, or foster family, and is struggling to find a positive outlet regarding their feelings on family life. Join to socially connect and discuss topics related to challenges that arise in adoptive/foster/guardianship family dynamics.

Date: October 5 - Creating School/Life Balance

Time: 7:00 p.m.

For more information or to register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/virtual-group-sibling-support-group-tickets-151676764285?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

NAMI Family Support Group (Virtual)

For family members and those with a loved one impacted by mental health conditions.

When: 3rd Tuesday of each month

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, please contact

Denise: 262-409-2743 or denise@namiwaukesha.org.

NAMI Family Support Group (In Person)

For family members and those with a loved one impacted by mental health conditions. (Masks and social distancing will be required.)

When: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Where: Thirst Church, W360N7077 Brown St., Oconomowoc

For more information or to register, please contact

Denise: 262-409-2743 or denise@namiwaukesha.org.

NAMI Parent Peer Support Group (Virtual Until Further Notice)

For parents and caregivers who have a child under the age of 18 who is affected by a mental health condition and/or emotional difficulties. Gain insight from the successes of others facing similar experiences.

When: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month

Time: 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

For more information or to register, please contact

Denise: 262-409-2743 or denise@namiwaukesha.org.

Contact Numbers:

Foster Care Social Workers:

Waukesha County Health & Human Services
262-548-7212

Michelle Lim, Foster Care Supervisor
262-970-4761

Cassie BeLow 262-896-8574

Rhonda Klinger 262-548-7240

Jennifer Mantei 262-548-7250

Libby Sinclair 262-548-7277

Hilary Smith 262-548-7254

Case Management Social Workers:

Angie Sadler, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7272

Eric Calvino, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7271

Eve Altizer, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor
262-548-7267

Nicole Allende 262-548-7265

Jamie Carter 262-548-7264

Kimberly Dudzik 262-548-7347

Stephanie Engle 262-548-7424

Megan Fishler 262-896-8570

Abbey Girman 262-548-7695

Sharon Godwin 262-548-7684

Laura Jahnke 262-548-7359

Alyssa Jones 262-548-7239

Jessica Larsen 262-548-7346

Maria Maurer 262-548-7345

Rachel O'Sullivan 262-548-7639

Jessica Palmersheim 262-896-8281

Johanna Ploeger 262-896-6857

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson 262-548-7273

Linda Senger 262-548-7698

Brittany Sutton 262-548-7262

Children's Mental Health Outreach
262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911

Family Emergency: 211 or 262-547-3388

Happy Halloween



If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

FASPP
Norma Schoenberg
920-922-9627

Happy Fall Y'all!!!